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ABSTRACT

This report presents 14 recommended policies and related practices aimed toward meeting the needs of older, part-time students attending California State University (CSU) campuses. Focus is placed on part-time students who are 25 years of age and enrolled in less than 12 semester units, in undergraduate or graduate degree programs. The report also provides an overview of the change being experienced in the general U.S. population, in the California population, and within the California State University, specifically the trend toward older students who are more diverse in ethnic makeup, and with special learning and employment demands. The 14 recommended policies and practices include the following areas: (1) developing an addition to the CSU mission statement regarding nontraditional students; (2) conducting and documenting a needs assessment; (3) creating an ethnic representation on campus; (4) providing programs for ethnic student needs; (5) developing nontraditional student recruitment and admissions procedures; (6) awarding financial aid in a more flexible fashion; (7) providing sufficient numbers of courses and locations to complete degree requirements, providing support services to encourage degree completion, and providing alternate credit-bearing programs when needed; (8) providing greater access to academic programs and resources; (9) supplying contract education programs; and (10) working with faculty and staff to meet and support the educational needs of nontraditional students. (GLR)

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Policies and Practices to Meet the Needs of Older, Part-Time Students

Commission on the Older, Part-Time Student

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

400 GOLDEN SHORE, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90802-4275

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Major objectives of this initiative are as follows:

- increase awareness of the work of the CSU Institute for Teaching and Learning;
- increase access to the work of CSU/ITL affiliates;
- begin to build a subset of information on teaching and learning that supports *The National Teaching and Learning Forum (NTLF)*, ERIC/HE's newsletter;
- encourage use of the ERIC system by CSU/ITL member affiliates and the *NTLF* readership; and
- test a model for collaboration between ERIC/HE and a major higher education system.

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POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OLDER, PART-TIME STUDENTS

Commission on the Older, Part-Time Student

The California State University
Academic Affairs
March 1990

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Introduction

The Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education has recommended that the California State University have the responsibility for meeting the needs of older, part-time students who desire to pursue the baccalaureate degree. More specifically, the master plan commission has recommended that:

- The role and mission statement of the CSU contain a specific commitment to integrating older, part-time students who are eligible to matriculate into academic degree programs.
- The Trustees make specific organizational changes necessary to carry out that commitment to older, part-time students.
- The Trustees review and, where necessary, adapt admissions standards for older students to account for skills and experiences that are a better measure of potential success than are out-of-date high school records.
- The Governor and Legislature express the state's commitment to equity for older, part-time students by funding all CSU courses and programs leading to degrees for matriculated students, whether on or off campus.

The California State University Commission on the Older, Part-Time Student was established in March 1988 under the chairmanship of Dr. Harold H. Haak to study the above recommendations and to advise the chancellor concerning their implementation. The work of the commission has been supported by a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

The CSU commission was charged to:

- Review existing system programs, policies, procedures, and organizational structures in light of the needs of older, part-time students.
- Recommend system goals pertaining to the improvement of access, programs, and services for older, part-time students and a strategic plan for achieving these goals.
- Recommend specific long-range policies and procedures pertaining to improved access to the programs, services, and resources of the CSU for older, part-time students, on and off campus.
- Recommend specific changes in policy, financing, organization, and practice intended to make the CSU more responsive to the academic and educational support needs of older, part-time students, both on and off campus and in both state-supported and self-supporting programs.

In formulating its recommendations, the commission was asked to review existing CSU policies, practices, and organization in light of the evolving educational needs of society. The issues to be considered included recruitment, access, student support services, design and delivery of instruction, academic programs, faculty development, and collaboration with the business, government, and voluntary communities.

The commission met and worked over a period of 18 months and during that time prepared working papers and held discussions on critical issues before the CSU in regard to older, part-time students. This report presents to the chancellor the commission's recommendations consisting of 14 policies and related practices aimed toward meeting the needs of older, part-time students. This report does not, however, propose the costs associated with the policies and practices. The commission believed that such costs should be proposed by the chancellor's staff as it reviews this document and priorities are established among the policies and practices.

The commission recognizes that some of the recommended practices are already being carried out on some or many of the 20 CSU campuses. However, they are included in this report to ensure that a comprehensive overview is available to the reader. Further, the recommended practices are not exhaustive of what can be done to meet policy objectives. Rather, the practices are illustrative of what commission members believe are most noteworthy at this time. Commission members are confident that as a comprehensive guide to what can be done to better meet the needs of older, part-time students, the recommended policies and practices contained in this report will both enhance campus climate and lead to improved campus organizational structure.

Finally, this report focuses on part-time students who are 25 years of age or older and enrolled in less than 12 semester units. It centers on students who matriculate in undergraduate or graduate degree programs. Although the focus of this report is on that population, we believe all students at the CSU, both younger and older, both full time and part time, will benefit from the policies and practices described in this report.

The report is organized in the following manner:

The National Context
The California Context
The California State University Context
Recommended California State University Policies and Practices

The National Context

The nation has witnessed dramatic changes in the past several decades — changes in the way we live, work, and study. A few examples will suffice:

- The society is aging. The median age is rising steadily. By the year 2000, Americans over 30 years of age will make up close to 60 percent of the population. Well into the twenty-first century, the population will be made up of relatively fewer children and youth and a greater proportion of middle age and older people.

- The nation grows increasingly diverse in its ethnic and racial makeup. As we enter and progress through the twenty-first century, one in three Americans and the majority of children in this nation will be Hispanic, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, or American Indian.

- We have become a learning society. The vast majority of all children under 18 are in school, more than one-half of the graduating seniors move on to college, and six million adults enroll each year in college credit programs. And there are millions more in noncredit college programs and multimillions more learning from their employers, their professional associations and unions, their churches, their hospitals, and their museums. Learning is no longer a sometime thing. It is a national habit and it will continue to be so in the decades to follow as rapid social, economic, and personal life changes demand that people acquire new competencies for new life roles.

- The work world is in continuous flux, moving steadily toward an economy dominated by high technology and the service industries. The changing nature of jobs demands skilled, competent workers. This requires an educated workforce and the necessity for workers to learn continuously to keep up with accelerating changes. The economy of the twenty-first century will be dependent on a nondepletable resource of human energy and creativity. Human resource development is the capital asset of America's economic future.

- Americans work at six or seven different jobs during their lifetimes, six or seven mini-careers, each possibly requiring new skills, new knowledge, and new attitudes/values. The fastest growing jobs in society are those that require a college education.

The California Context

Things are no different in California. As has been aptly said, what will happen in the nation next is happening in California now.

- One of every nine Americans is a Californian.
- California's population is aging steadily, just as is the nation's.
- By the year 2000, California will become a majority minority state. More than one-half of the population will be Hispanic, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, or American Indian. A combination of low income, high birth rate, high dropout rate from high school, and low completion rate in college for some groups threatens dire consequences for the state's economic and social future. This smoggy future is made darker by a 20 percent adult illiteracy rate for the state overall. The state is face-to-face with the possibility of a permanent underclass.
- By the year 2000, more than one in three of California's school-age children will be Latino, one in eight will be Asian, and one in twelve will be Black — making up close to 60 percent of the school-age population.
- Over one-third of Latinos and Blacks drop out of school before the 12th grade (a rate 50 percent higher than for Whites), producing a dropout rate that grew from the 1970s to the 1980s and now makes California ranked 40th in the nation for keeping students through high school graduation.
- California is the sixth greatest economy in the world — an economy primarily based on the creation, processing and communication of information. Less than one in four workers is engaged in making things. California's future will be dependent upon the ability of the state's educational system to develop the trained and flexible workforce needed for the diversity of businesses that represent the state's major economic advantages.
- By the year 2020, 60 percent of the state's workforce will be persons of color.
- California's future potential as well as its current success lies in the skills of its workforce. Thus, California's economic future is closely linked to the education of its workforce. The state's positioning in a global, highly competitive international environment compels it to educate that workforce fully. Its major challenge is to ensure that all adults, particularly underrepresented minorities, have access to higher education opportunities that range from graduate degree study to one-day, noncredit, skill-training workshops.

The California State University Context

Rapid social change produces rapidly changing institutions of higher education. The California State University is an extraordinary example.

- The typical student among CSU students is 26 years of age; undergraduates are typically 24 and postbaccalaureate/graduate students are typically 33.
- Forty-two percent of the 355,000 CSU matriculated students in 1988 were 25 years of age or older.
- The proportion of older students varies across CSU's 20 campuses from 20 percent to 70 percent. In 1987, seven campuses enrolled more older students than traditional-age students.

The proportion of minority group enrollments among younger and older CSU students does not differ very much, as illustrated in the following chart:

Ethnic Group Enrollments

	Less than 25 years of age %	25 years of age or older %
American Indian	1	1
Asian	12	8
Black	5	5
Filipino	3	1
Mexican American	8	6
Other Hispanic	3	3
Pacific Islander	1	1
White	59	63
Unknown/Non-Resident	8	12

Fall, 1988
Office of the Chancellor
Division of Analytic Studies

The chart below displays the numbers of older students at different levels within CSU.

Fall, 1988
CSU Headcount

	Number of Students	Number 25 Years and Older
Freshman	60,362	3,018
Sophomore	40,931	4,912
Junior	79,220	26,143
Senior	104,416	52,208
Postbaccalaureate	33,975	29,558
Graduate	36,202	32,220

One pattern is clear and dramatic: adults are heavily concentrated in upper-division, postbaccalaureate, and graduate studies. This could be true because older students do not apply to CSU's lower division, but rather get their needs fully satisfied by community colleges and thus do not turn to CSU until they reach upper-division status. On the other hand, older students may not even consider applying for lower-division study for one reason or another or may not be aware of the opportunity to apply. Regardless, the CSU should explore the reasons for this skewed distribution of older students in the system so as to ensure that older students do, indeed, have access to lower-division study equal to that of younger students. This is recommended despite the fact that CSU's mission requires it to maintain a split between lower-division and upper-division enrollments on a ratio of 40:60 for undergraduate students.

- The older student has been changing both the direction and magnitude of CSU enrollment shifts. Considering those adults enrolled in matriculated programs only, the number rose from roughly 60,000 in 1967 to 140,000 in 1987, an increase of 130 percent in just 20 years.

- The real action is with the even more mature student — those 35 years of age or older. This cohort has accounted for about 50 percent of CSU's total enrollment increase over the past decade and has been especially significant in keeping CSU's postbaccalaureate and graduate enrollments from experiencing sharp declines.

- In 1988, 40 percent of CSU students were part-time students, a rate that has remained relatively stable over the past 10 years.

- Approximately 65 percent of older students attend the CSU part time. While this report considers its target the older, part-time student, it is noteworthy that one of every three older students attends full time.

- There is another group of adults at the CSU, in addition to the 43 percent or so who matriculate. It is those who enroll in CSU's extended and continuing education programs; who sit in CSU's regular classrooms as ''concurrent'' students (entering through the door of Extension); who attend special sessions in January and throughout the year; or who enroll in summer session, contract programs, or noncredit classes or workshops. In 1987-88,

the total number of registrations in these CSU instructional options totaled 252,342 (one-third produced through regular summer session registrations), producing a revenue of $46,418,490. In short, with 42 percent of matriculated students and 250,000 or so enrollments through extended and continuing education (made up nearly in total by adult students), the CSU has become an "adult" university — perhaps unintendedly.

Adults have made their way onto CSU's 20 campuses because they have to acquire new skills, new knowledge, and new behaviors, primarily to cope with changes in their career and personal lives. In some sense, the CSU has responded admirably. It must be doing many things right to attract and keep so many older, part-time students. Then why was the Commission on the Older, Part-Time Student created? Why are many citizens and staff concerned about the way CSU reaches and serves the state's population? The answers are revealed in the policies, problems, and practices presented in the following pages.

Recommended California State University Policies and Suggested Practices

POLICY 1: MISSION

The California State University shall have a mission statement that contains an explicit commitment to meeting the higher education needs of older, part-time students and to providing training and education services to organizations throughout the state.

Problem

The CSU mission statement does not include a specific commitment to older, part-time students and to collaborative relationships with organizations — businesses and industries, government agencies, and voluntary associations. Lacking such explicit commitments, the CSU may fail to offer, and older, part-time students and organizations may fail to ask for, the full range of services and the kinds of special considerations needed to meet their needs.

Recommended Practices

1. Materials supplemental to the mission statement define older, part-time students.

2. Materials supplemental to the mission statement contain illustrations of the higher education needs of older, part-time students.

3. Materials supplemental to the mission statement call for meeting the needs of older, part-time adults in a manner that is central rather than marginal to the functions and services of the system.

4. Materials supplemental to the mission statement define community-wide organizations, such as businesses and industries, government agencies, and voluntary associations.

5. Materials supplemental to the mission statement contain illustrations of collaboration with community-wide organizations, such as businesses and industries, government agencies, and voluntary associations.

6. Materials supplemental to the mission statement are widely published in current materials likely to be read by administrators; faculty members; older, part-time adult students; and officials of community-wide organizations, such as businesses and industries, government agencies, and voluntary associations.

7. In addition to its mission statement and supporting materials, the CSU has a statement of objectives regarding programs and services for older, part-time students.

POLICY 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The California State University shall document the characteristics and needs of potential older, part-time learners throughout the state.

Problem

The CSU does not follow a policy of examining and recording the attributes of higher education requirements of older, part-time learners throughout the state. As a consequence, CSU can neither identify potential students among those adults nor anticipate the needs of those who enroll on their own initiative. The effect is that some who should enroll do not and some who do enroll may not be well served.

Recommended Practices

1. The CSU follows a systematic pattern of collecting, examining, recording, and analyzing the characteristics and needs of older, part-time students throughout the state.

2. The methods used include a balanced combination of small sample inquiries into qualitative data and large sample inquiries into quantitative data.

3. The methods used include the collecting of primary testimony from older, part-time students themselves and secondary testimony about their characteristics and needs from other persons situated to observe them.

4. The results of the analysis and the implications for responsive action by the CSU are published in a form convenient for use by CSU administrators and faculty members.

POLICY 3: ETHNIC REPRESENTATION

The California State University shall enroll an older, part-time student body that reflects the ethnic characteristics of the state.

Problem

Data are needed to describe the extent to which CSU's older student body represents the ethnic populations of the state. It may be that potential adult students of minority backgrounds do not attend campuses of the CSU system in numbers reflective of those minorities. Moreover, California's economic, social, political, and civic well-being is lessened when qualified ethnic, older populations have limited opportunities to obtain the advanced knowledge and skills they need.

Recommended Practices

1. The demographic composition of the current student body is compared to the demographic composition of the state and discrepancies noted.

2. Plans are written to reduce the discrepancies and are then put into practice.

3. Progress is monitored as those plans are carried out to make certain that the desirable changes in practice actually occur.

4. The succeeding comparative report is examined for evidence of progress in reducing the demographic discrepancies noted in the previous report.

5. When certain regions of the state are undergoing rapid demographic changes, CSU campuses intensify their efforts to eliminate discrepancies lest they grow larger.

6. The existing educational equity plans of CSU's campuses should be expanded in focus to include older, part-time students.

POLICY 4: ETHNIC GROUP NEEDS

The California State University shall provide the programs and services that meet the higher education needs of older, part-time students among ethnic groups throughout the state.

Problem

California: the majority minority state. Minority students in higher education will be in the majority by the year 2000; the minority population will be in the majority by the year 2010. Because some minority student populations do not graduate from high school at rates commensurate to their numbers in the total population and because those who do graduate remain underrepresented in higher education, the population contains millions of minority adults, particularly Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians, who have not had the advantages of higher education. That is disadvantageous for higher education, for the individual and for the larger society, especially as the proportion of undereducated minority adults rises. Moreover, different ethnic groups have different needs.

Recommended Practices

1. The CSU, at regular intervals, makes an analysis of data collected by other agencies as to the numbers and characteristics of specific ethnic groups by region.

2. The CSU, at regular intervals, makes a study of the higher education needs of specific ethnic groups by region.

3. CSU campuses create and distribute publications in the native languages of major ethnic groups in the region.

4. CSU campuses continue efforts to achieve higher rates of employment of minority personnel in their admissions, outreach, and counseling offices.

5. CSU campuses establish outreach offices in ethnic neighborhoods to make it easy for ethnic group members to get admissions and financial aid information, obtain advice, select courses, register, and pay fees.

6. CSU campuses, in collaboration with the community colleges, continue to offer noncredit courses in English as a second language and seek to increase such courses as necessary in a manner convenient to older, part-time students.

7. CSU campuses seek to enhance employment of individuals from underrepresented ethnic groups as regular and adjunct faculty.

8. CSU campuses arrange training sessions for support staff personnel and faculty on the characteristics and needs of specific ethnic groups.

9. CSU campuses utilize students from underrepresented ethnic groups in orientations for incoming ethnic group students.

10. CSU campuses sponsor bimonthly meetings of students from various ethnic groups to report on their campus experiences and suggest improvements.

POLICY 5: RECRUITMENT

The California State University shall attract older, part-time students through the use of recruitment procedures that match their personal, work-related, and learning preferences.

Problem

Most recruitment procedures are predicated on the assumption that high school and community college students must be sought, while out-of-school, older, part-time students can make their own way to the campus. The result is often a disproportionate amount of campus effort directed to the high schools and community colleges, with the consequence that many potential older, part-time students are not actively and systematically sought and do not enroll, even though they are capable of benefiting from higher education.

Recommended Practices

1. The CSU produces statewide and campus-related publications, such as basic admissions packets and recruitment materials, that are as appropriate to older, part-time students as they are to traditional-age students.

2. CSU campus recruiters can be found on community college campuses encouraging older, part-time students to transfer after finishing their two-year programs.

3. CSU campus recruiters are as likely to be found in employer sites encouraging working adults as in high schools and community colleges talking with prospective college students.

4. CSU campuses work closely with community college staff to identify older, part-time students in the colleges who require special support and guidance in pursuit of further, formal education.

5. CSU campus counselors provide academic, career, and personal advice to older, part-time students before they enroll.

6. Media selected for publicizing CSU opportunities include avenues likely to reach older, part-time students as well as prospective younger, full-time students.

7. CSU campus recruitment events such as open houses are scheduled during hours that make them conveniently accessible to prospective older, part-time students.

8. Targeted recruitment efforts are used to reach groups of prospective older, part-time students such as re-entry women, professionals, labor union members, college dropouts, displaced homemakers, the unemployed, and others undergoing significant transitions in their lives which CSU campuses identify regularly in the communities they serve.

9. Community agencies are asked to assist with recruiting.

10. An advisory committee assists with the recruitment of older, part-time students.

POLICY 6: ADMISSIONS

The California State University shall ensure that admissions criteria are sufficiently flexible to account for the unique skills, abilities, and learning derived from experiences of older, part-time students.

Problem

Most admissions procedures have grown out of a tradition of dealing largely with younger, full-time students whose experiences were limited to college preparation through a relatively standard high school and community college curriculum and whose abilities and achievements could be adequately represented by a high school transcript, a letter from a high school principal or counselor, and an array of test scores. The effect is a set of procedures that may not measure the richer, more diverse backgrounds of older, part-time students who wish to enroll. The result is that such adults are not always adequately assessed, judged, counseled, and placed.

Recommended Practices

1. The CSU embellishes its existing admissions approach with procedures more appropriate to admitting older, part-time students. Those procedures include the following elements:

   a. Background information collected about the applicant includes information about the applicant's accomplishments, including non-collegiate study, past and current employment, recommendations from employers, family circumstances, participation in civic and community activities, and career aspirations.

   b. Campus admissions counselors are experienced staff who know the variety of adult experiences and their relevance to college study.

   c. Opportunity to file a portfolio of proof of prior accomplishments which cannot be demonstrated by the application form and the interview.

   d. Opportunities to take Challenge and other examinations to demonstrate prior learning, earn academic credit, and achieve advanced standing.

2. The CSU works with Academic Senate representatives to develop appropriate means of recognizing and granting academic credit for knowledge and skills derived from informal educational experiences of older, part-time students.

3. CSU campuses energetically advertise a special procedure for students who have attained the age of 25 that allows them to admit such students who have been out of college at least five years if, in the judgment of campus authorities, their potential for success is equal to that of students meeting regular freshman admissions standards, irrespective of their eligibility upon graduation from high school (Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 40756 for entering freshmen, and 40807 for transfer students). The CSU establishes a process for reviewing this existing policy to determine its adequacy in providing access.

4. CSU encourages the granting of academic credit for CSU-approved courses provided by employers and the military, consistent with ACE guidelines.

5. CSU policy which authorizes provisional admission is implemented by all campuses to serve older, part-time students whose applications require lengthy processing time.

6. CSU campuses provide continuing enrollment status for older, part-time students so that they can (a) withdraw for longer than several semesters under certain defined circumstances and return without having to apply for re-admission and (b) keep in effect their original degree requirements (including general education and major course work).

7. CSU campuses offer a special intake and orientation procedure for older, part-time students designed to address their unique needs and circumstances.

8. CSU takes measures to ensure that testing requirements do not discourage or deter older, part-time students from seeking enrollment, such as the waiver of tests under certain circumstances or providing special assistance in preparing for required placement and other tests.

POLICY 7: FINANCIAL AID

The California State University shall award institutional, state, and federal financial aid to older, part-time students in ways that ensure that their needs are met on an equitable basis.

Problem

Some older, part-time students do not receive sufficient financial aid to pursue their education. The consequence is that some eligible, academically capable, motivated adults cannot take advantage of higher education for lack of funds. And some others can take only one course at a time and make slow progress toward their academic destinations.

Recommended Practices

1. CSU periodically examines the levels and proportions of financial aid received by older, part-time students.

2. CSU campuses actively publicize the availability of financial aid for older, part-time students.

3. CSU campuses ensure that all admissions and financial aid personnel and all counselors are informed about the types and amounts of financial aid currently available for older, part-time students.

4. CSU campuses send representatives to major employers in the region to encourage tuition reimbursement policies which enable older employees to become part-time students partly or wholly at the employer's expense.

5. CSU campuses make special solicitations from their former older, part-time students to establish scholarship and loan funds exclusively for the benefit of current and future older, part-time students.

POLICY 8: COURSE SCHEDULES AND LOCATIONS

The California State University shall provide sufficient numbers of courses and programs that are scheduled at times and locations necessary to complete degree requirements.

Problem

Not all older, part-time students are able to obtain their higher education through standard schedules for courses or regular locations for classes. Some have to be taught at different times in different places or their needs will not be met. Limiting arrangements to the traditional ways does not provide a learning environment suitable for such students, whose education will suffer as a result.

Recommended Practices

1. CSU campuses offer some proportion of courses through modes of distance learning on schedules designed to fit the circumstances of older, part-time learners.

2. CSU campuses provide special incentives for faculty members who teach at nontraditional times and/or in nontraditional places.

3. CSU campuses use selected off-campus locations for a limited number of upper-division and graduate programs chosen for their probable appeal to older, part-time students.

4. CSU campuses contract with major employers to provide a complete degree program at the employer sites for cohorts of older employees who have agreed to move through a fixed series of courses on a fixed, part-time schedule.

5. CSU campuses offer complete evening degree programs.

6. CSU campuses offer weekend degree programs consisting of intensive courses scheduled for full-time employees, who can earn the degree without ever attending weekday classes.

7. CSU campuses make available a number of study courses in which students couple class assignments with work assignments and carry out a single activity or create a single product in the work setting which simultaneously satisfies both assignments.

8. CSU campuses offer laboratory sessions at night in up-to-date settings provided by other organizations at their own sites to give older, part-time students the benefit of learning advanced skills in state-of-the-art facilities.

9. CSU campuses schedule sections of some courses in double-length class sessions and schedule sections of others in back-to-back pairs so that older, part-time students can come to campus half as often, but stay twice as long.

10. CSU campuses survey both prospective and currently enrolled part-time students as to their preferred schedules and locations for courses and then build their schedules and choose their locations accordingly.

POLICY 9: SUPPORT SERVICES

The California State University shall supply educational support services that are designed to help older, part-time students meet their educational objectives and that are scheduled at times and places convenient for them.

Problem

Most CSU services were designed to meet the needs of younger, full-time students: dormitories, athletic facilities, student lounges, on-site registration, student government, student activities, with supporting offices open during the day. Older, part-time students especially value more flexible services: registration by telephone, payment by credit card, financial planning, child care, career-change advice, loans or deferred payment arrangements pending tuition reimbursement from employers. In short, both the type and timing of services have to be extended.

Recommended Practices

1. CSU campuses operate re-entry centers, supported by the general fund, geared to older, part-time students returning to college after an absence. Re-entry centers would provide information, advice, skill-building workshops, and a place to relax and socialize.

2. CSU campuses offer periodic pre-admission workshops at locations convenient to working adults for re-entry students who seek education and career-planning information.

3. CSU campuses offer students extended opportunities to register by telephone and pay by credit card.

4. CSU campuses create convenient methods for registration such as using a drive-through booth open early mornings and late evenings.

5. CSU campus testing centers are open weekends and evenings for students seeking credit by examination or wishing to assess their abilities, skills, aptitudes, or interests.

6. CSU campuses provide older, part-time students access to academic advisors trained to assess their needs and help them plan an academic program attuned to those needs.

7. CSU campuses operate Learning Assistance Centers that are knowledgeable in helping older, part-time students improve their study skills, basic skills (math, reading, writing), and other skills related to their college performance, such as in statistical analysis, computer operations, and English as a second language.

8. CSU campus job placement centers arrange appointments in prospective employers' offices for older, part-time students as well as on campus.

9. Student government structures and functions are established to encourage participation by older, part-time students.

10. CSU campuses establish a study committee of students, faculty members, and administrators to develop guidelines for activity fees that are equitable for both younger, full-time and older, part-time students.

11. CSU campuses address the needs of the "older-older" student (60 years of age and over), such as providing special counseling opportunities and waiver of student fees.

12. CSU campuses, in conducting Trustee-required evaluation of student services at least every five years, evaluate all basic campus services to determine their effectiveness in serving older, part-time students.

POLICY 10: TIMELY COMPLETION OF STUDY

The California State University shall encourage older, part-time students to complete, on a timely basis, degree programs or other academic goals that they have initiated.

Problem

Many older CSU students as well as younger students do not graduate or finish their desired courses of study on a timely basis. The reasons for this are numerous, including conflicting responsibilities, such as home and work that take up valuable class and study time, financial restrictions, and lack of readiness to perform the necessary academic tasks.

Recommended Practices

1. CSU campuses publish an annual report of attrition among older, part-time students that is broken down by program, type of student credits earned by students before leaving, academic objectives, ethnicity, and other relevant factors that illuminate the problem in sufficient detail to stimulate corrective action. The report is distributed widely to campus staff.

2. CSU campuses conduct in-depth follow-up studies of small, but representative groups of older learners to gather information about their academic objectives, ascertain their reasons for leaving and to learn what the institution might have done to prevent their departure.

3. CSU campuses mount an intensive effort to persuade incoming students of the psychological, occupational, and financial value of earning certificates and/or diplomas before leaving.

4. CSU campuses provide incentives for students to stop by counseling centers for exit interviews before leaving, both to collect explanatory data and to give counselors a last chance to solve the problems causing them to leave.

5. CSU campuses intensify entry testing and academic diagnosis to improve placement decisions.

6. CSU campuses offer workshops for entering and continuing students on juggling work, family, study, and other responsibilities.

POLICY 11: NON-DEGREE STUDY

The California State University shall provide alternative credit-bearing programs at upper-division and graduate levels which precede or substitute entirely for degree study, such as shorter-term certificates.

Problem

Many older, part-time students enter or return to college to obtain a body of knowledge and skill that can be learned in less than four years of full-time study. Many others need the equivalent of four years of full-time study, but cannot dedicate the necessary eight to ten years of part-time study — at least not at this point in their lives. Many others simply need milestones to mark their progress in a long, continuous journey toward a baccalaureate degree. Many others already have four-year degrees. A campus on which the only visible destination is a four-year degree will seem an unwelcoming, unaccommodating place to such students.

Recommended Practices

1. CSU campuses offer a number of "milestone" awards documenting progress toward baccalaureate degrees in the liberal arts. Not intended to signify occupational readiness, these awards are instead designed to reward progress and encourage continued effort.

2. CSU campuses offer a number of credit-bearing certificates at upper-division and graduate levels — 15 credits, 30 credits, 45 credits — in occupational fields. Based on a cluster of related courses leading to a specific, marketable skill within that occupation, the certificates are intended to signify that level of accomplishment both to the student and to prospective employers.

POLICY 12: DISTANCE LEARNING

The California State University shall provide appropriate information technologies — computing, video, audio, teleconferencing — to enable older, part-time students access to academic programs and resources.

Problem

Not all older, part-time students are able to obtain their higher education through traditional methods of teaching: classroom lectures, discussion seminars, textbook assignments, laboratory exercises, and term papers. Some learn better through other means. If CSU limits itself to traditional methods, it is not providing an instructional environment suitable for such students.

Recommended Practices

1. In consultation with faculty members, CSU campuses offer an array of interactive television, audio, and computer-based materials and courses selected for their probable appeal to older, part-time students.

2. In consultation with faculty members, CSU campuses provide videotapes of selected courses for use by organizations in the continuing professional development of their key employees and provide, by special arrangement, adjunct faculty to accompany and supplement those videotapes at the organization's site.

3. CSU campuses place in public libraries or other appropriate facilities throughout the state computer terminals connected to campus mainframes by modem. CSU campus catalogs can be called up on the screen along with the student's current transcript. Using them, the student can project alternative sequences of courses leading to a degree and can determine which of the proposed sequences satisfy the decision rules built into the computer. Having done that, the student can call up the current campus class schedule, select the next course(s), register, and pay by credit card before leaving the terminal in the public library.

4. CSU campus testing centers place all appropriate tests on their computers to permit convenient administration and instant scoring.

POLICY 13: CONTRACT EDUCATION

The California State University shall supply upper-division and graduate programs and services through contractual arrangements to organizations on a self-support basis that require upper-division and graduate-level higher education for their employees, clients, or members.

Problem

Organizations — businesses and industries, government agencies and voluntary associations — are the primary supplier of training to older, part-time students. Much of this training is job-specific and thus of short-term value to the student. Even when it is extensive and substantial, it does not carry college academic credit and does not serve to credential the student for more advanced study. And widespread though it is, it is not sufficient to keep the state's labor force current, skillful, productive, and, perhaps most important, able to undertake the next level of instruction.

Recommended Practices

1. CSU campuses make a biennial survey of employers in the region to determine their training and education needs.

2. CSU campuses send representatives to interview major employers that have agreed to consider contracting with the campus to provide courses on their sites for their personnel.

3. CSU campuses make a biennial survey of their faculty to locate individuals who are interested in teaching courses at organization sites for organization personnel.

4. CSU campuses maintain an up-to-date list of faculty members who are interested in teaching organization personnel at organization sites.

5. CSU campuses employ organization personnel as faculty members.

6. CSU campuses design and distribute special publications intended to persuade students in organization classes to enroll in on-campus degree programs.

7. CSU campuses advertise their contract training for organizations by citing their successful contracts and giving references.

8. CSU campuses establish advisory committees made up of organizational representatives to assess and define regional needs for education and training programs.

POLICY 14: FACULTY AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The California State University shall work with faculty and staff to meet the educational and support service needs of older, part-time students.

Problem

Many campus personnel — administrators, faculty members, support personnel, and others — are oriented toward younger, full-time students and thus are not sufficiently aware of the characteristics and needs of older, part-time students. The consequence is that those students must deal every day with some personnel who, although not hostile, are often uninformed and indifferent. And other prospective students, encountering such persons at the gateway to the campus, may sense that they are unwelcome, become discouraged, and never enroll.

Recommended Practices

1. CSU campuses sponsor mentorship programs in which faculty members act as mentors to small groups of older, part-time students during their first year on campus — and thereafter, if necessary, in individual cases.

2. CSU campuses conduct training sessions for staff such as secretaries, security guards, custodians, maintenance personnel, and cafeteria workers on the importance of older, part-time students to the institution and on their typical behavior patterns while on campus.

3. CSU campuses conduct professional development seminars for faculty members and student services professionals on topics such as the reasons for adults returning to school, teaching older and younger students simultaneously, and using adult students' experiences to enrich classroom instruction.

4. CSU campuses sponsor annual weekend retreats for key academic administrators, featuring a presentation by an academic administrator from a system campus or from other institutions about successful accommodations made there for older, part-time students.

5. The CSU circulates papers dealing with demographic changes in the state and in certain regions requiring higher education for older, part-time students.

6. CSU campuses conduct summer workshops for human resources personnel to keep them up-to-date on campus activities.